

Caponata

1 ½ pounds eggplant	Salt
Olive oil	1 pound ripe tomatoes, preferably romas
1 medium onion, chopped	3 Tbl capers, rinsed and drained
2 stalks celery (inner stalks), chopped	3 Tbl coarsely chopped pitted green olives
3 garlic cloves, minced	2 Tbl plus a pinch of sugar
2 red bell peppers, diced	3 Tbl red or white wine vinegar

1. Peel, seed and chop tomatoes.
2. Cut the eggplant into 1 inch cubes and toss it with plenty of olive oil (several tablespoons), salt and pepper.
3. Put in a baking dish. Add a splash of water. Cover the baking dish and bake at 375 degrees for 45 minutes. Let cool.
4. Heat 1 tablespoon of olive oil over medium heat in a large skillet.
5. Add the onion and celery. Cook, stirring often, until the onion softens, about 5 minutes.
6. Add the garlic and cook for a minute.
7. Add the peppers and ½ teaspoon of salt. Cook, stirring often, until just about tender, about 8 minutes.
8. Add another tablespoon of oil and the roasted eggplant.
9. Stir together and cook for another 5 minutes, until the vegetables are tender. The eggplant will fall apart, which is fine. Season to taste.
10. Add the tomatoes to the skillet with about ½ teaspoon salt and a pinch of sugar. Cook, stirring often, for 10 minutes, until the tomatoes have cooked down somewhat.
11. Add the capers, olives, remaining sugar, and vinegar. Turn the heat to low and cook, stirring often, for about 20 minutes, until the vegetables are really tender and the mixture is quite thick.
12. Season to taste with salt and pepper and remove from heat. Allow to cool to room temperature.
13. If possible, cover and chill overnight. (It gets better overnight.)
14. Can be served cold or at room temperature.

From Ron Johnson via the *New York Times*

NOTES FROM RON

Caponata is a Sicilian sweet and sour version of ratatouille. It makes a great topping for bruschetta.